

REMARKS

At the outset, Applicant thanks the Examiner for examining the pending application. The Office Action dated October 8, 2009 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1-9 are rejected. Applicant has amended claims 1, 5, 8 and 9 to further define the invention. No new matter has been added.

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). Claim 9 is objected to for informalities.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement, and rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Duijneveldt (US Patent 5,975,722 A).

Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

The amendments to claims 1, 5, 8, and 9 make the objection to the drawings and the objection to claim 9 moot. The amendments to claims 1, 5, 8, and 9 also make the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph moot.

Claims 1 and 5 are allowable over the cited references in that claims 1 and 5 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the odd-numbered lamps, and wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the even-numbered lamps." Duijneveldt fails to teach at least this feature of claims 1 and 5.

In Duijneveldt a first AC power source 8 is applied to lamps 4, 4', 4'', and 4''' in series, and a second AC power source 9 is applied to lamps 5, 5', 5'', and 5''' in series. Hence, Duijneveldt fails to teach or suggest "wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the odd-numbered lamps, and wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the even-numbered lamps."

Claims 8 and 9 are allowable over the cited references in that claims 8 and 9 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "wherein the lamps are arranged in a plurality of groups, each group including N lamps directly next to one another (where N is a positive integer greater than 1), wherein the plurality of low voltage electrodes of odd-numbered groups of lamps are disposed at the first side and the plurality of high voltage electrodes of odd-numbered groups of lamps are disposed at the second side, wherein the plurality of high voltage electrodes of even-numbered groups of lamps are disposed at the

first side and the plurality of low voltage electrodes of even-numbered groups of lamps are disposed at the second side” and “wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the odd-numbered groups of lamps, and wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the even-numbered groups of lamps.” Duijneveldt fails to teach this feature of claims 8 and 9.

Duijneveldt does not teach groups of “N lamps directly next to one another (where N is a positive integer greater than 1), wherein the plurality of low voltage electrodes of odd-numbered groups of lamps are disposed at the first side and the plurality of high voltage electrodes of odd-numbered groups of lamps are disposed at the second side.” In Duijneveldt each “group” would only have one lamp and not satisfy the above feature of claims 8 and 9. Further, in Duijneveldt a first AC power source 8 is applied to lamps 4, 4', 4'', and 4''' in series, and a second AC power source 9 is applied to lamps 5, 5', 5'', and 5''' in series. Hence, Duijneveldt fails to teach or suggest “wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the odd-numbered groups of lamps, and wherein the AC voltage is applied in parallel to the even-numbered groups of lamps.”

Thus, Duijneveldt fails to teach or suggest these features of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 5, 8 and 9 and claims 2-4, 6 and 7, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

Applicants believe the application is in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

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Respectfully submitted,

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